

**Foreword “Nudes and Portraits”** (book published by Hometown Media)

The relationship between the two intrinsically different artistic disciplines photography and painting has always been tense and is characterised by suspicion, distrust and a secret desire to copy. Photography has only recently gained acceptance as an acknowledged independent art form. Many photographers have modelled their work on painting, seeking to emulate, if not duplicate, its aesthetic appeal and technique. But times change, styles follow fashions and different artistic disciplines merge and fuse. When "virtually anything goes" finding points of friction and provocation is increasingly difficult – but not impossible: we can still dream of absolute freedom and seek ways of making that dream a visual reality. Image editing has made it possible to break down boundaries. Today's benchmark is not the "truth in the picture" or whether what you see is a true reflection of reality, but whether the story in the image moves and touches you.

Since the birth of photography depicting the human body has always been the ultimate challenge. What are constantly changing are the ways the artist plays with the theme and the shifts in moral and aesthetic borderlines.

In his ReVision project Rüdiger Schestag explores the interfaces between art and photography and their historical contexts. He seeks not to imitate the original painting, but simply to use selected stylistic features, combining them with elements of contemporary photography. All the models have kept their tattoos and piercing, both in the portraits and the scenic images. The models are contemporary; the fact that they belong to the here and now is a defining element of each image. The power of the portraits lies in the personality of the model and in the emanating aura of calm, the near-severity and aloofness of the poses and facial expressions, almost as if they had sat for days or weeks even as the artist's model. Costumes were secondary. The human being and the human body are the focus.

To say that nudity was all that counted would be a truism.

Rüdiger Schestag was born near Stuttgart, Germany, in 1964. He studied electronics, information technology and later photography in Hamburg, and is now lecturing and working as a freelance photographer in Stuttgart. As well as regular assignments in advertising and fashion he teaches photography in Russia and at the Merz-Akademie in Stuttgart. The focus of his work is the visualisation of complex subjects and conceptual photography depicting people, fashion and lifestyles. Following the success of his acclaimed "wallpaper-girls" series, which toured Germany and Russia in 2005 and 2007 respectively and of which 20 of the total 75 works have been included in the St Petersburg ROSFOTO imagebank, this catalogue now presents the current "ReVision" series comprising over 130 works. This project has already been presented in St. Petersburg.

[www.ruediger-schestag.de](http://www.ruediger-schestag.de)

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